

Short Paragraph on The Style is the Man

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Outlines:

- Style means manner of writing.
- Style is personal: each writer has a style of his own.
- Style is not added ornament.
- One's style must be one's own, not a copy of others.

By Style we mean manner. A cricketer's style is the manner in which he bats or bowls. When we speak of a speaker's style as being eloquent or humdrum, we mean to say that he speaks in an eloquent or in a humdrum way. So literary style is simply manner of writing, and the style of an author is simply his manner of writing-his own peculiar way of expressing his thoughts in words.

Every reputed writer has a style of his own; for style is a personal matter. No two people are exactly alike; so when a man speaks or writes, he expresses himself, and no one else. This is what a writer, meant when he said, "The style is the man". "A writer's style is as distinctive as his walk, his mode of dress or his personal habits" and, we may add, his handwriting. A hundred boys may learn to write from the same copybook in the same

school; yet in the end they will write so diversely that it will be easy to tell the difference between them. For example, Thomas Carlyle's style was rugged because Carlyle himself was a rugged character; and the even-tempered and clear-headed Addison naturally wrote in a smooth lucid and equable manner.

If a writer sticks to this he will save himself from slipping into two fatal errors. One is the mistaken idea that style is something added to plain writing by way of ornament. Young writers too often think that, to give their compositions, "style," they must decorate them with eloquent phrases, ornate metaphors, flowery language and other flourishes. This is all wrong. It is like plastering the natural face with paint and powder. The first rule for the formation of a writer's style is that he must be himself.

The other mistake is trying to imitate the style of some great :: writer. Firstly it cannot be done. You may learn to parody the styles of Lamb, Carlyle, Macaulay or Stevenson but you will capture only their mannerisms, while missing their essential qualities. Secondly, because to adopt another man's style is like putting on another man's clothes. They will neither fit nor suit you. Your style must be the natural expression of your own, not of another's personality. By all means study the styles of good authors, for you should know not only what a good writer says, but also how he says it. But study that, not in order to mimic his method of self-expression, but to learn better how to express yourself.